



April 8, 2004

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Dockets Management Branch
(HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
Room 1061
5630 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852

NATIONAL
FOOD
PROCESSORS
ASSOCIATION

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF COMMENT PERIOD

[Docket No. 2003N-0076] Food Labeling: *Trans* Fatty Acids in Nutrition Labeling; Consumer Research to Consider Nutrient Content and Health Claims and Possible Footnote or Disclosure Statements; Reopening of the Comment Period

69 Federal Register 9559, March 1, 2004.

John R. Cady

President and

Chief Executive Officer

Dear Sir or Madam:

The National Food Processors Association (NFPA) requests an extension of 45 days, to June 1, 2004, for the comment period on the referenced Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

NFPA is the voice of the \$500 billion food processing industry on scientific and public policy issues involving food safety, food security, nutrition, technical and regulatory matters and consumer affairs. NFPA's three scientific centers and international office (Bangkok, Thailand), its scientists and professional staff represent food industry interests on government and regulatory affairs and provide research, technical assistance, education, communications and crisis management support for the Association's U.S. and international members. NFPA members produce processed and packaged fruit, vegetable, and grain products, meat, poultry, and seafood products, snacks, drinks and juices, or provide supplies and services to food manufacturers.

NFPA has submitted comments several times to FDA on the issue of *trans* fat nutrition labeling and claims. In these previous comments, NFPA urged FDA to address the *trans* fat issue in the context of other processes and

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activities in which FDA was simultaneously engaged, most notably the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) studies conducted by the Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Academies. The current reopening of the comment period for *trans* fat labeling addresses that issue.

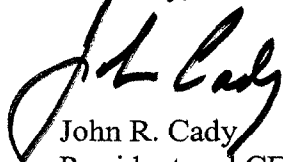
FDA has announced a meeting April 27-28, 2004, of the Nutrition Subcommittee of the FDA Food Advisory Committee (FAC) to discuss important scientific issues related to fat and *trans* fat in food labeling and claims. Because of this meeting schedule, it is equally important for the content of the Nutrition Subcommittee meeting to be included in the docket for this rulemaking. NFPA believes that the discussion of the FDA FAC Nutrition Subcommittee will present important scientific information and concepts relevant to the questions in the March 1, 2004, reopening of comment period on *trans* fat in nutrition labeling. NFPA believes it is essential to consider this information in its response to the March 2004 notice.

NFPA anticipates that a 45-day extension will provide sufficient time to consider the FAC Nutrition Subcommittee discussion, including review of the meeting transcript, in the development of responsive comments. As NFPA has previously commented, a coordinated approach is necessary to address *trans* fat labeling issues, and both the industry and public are best served by such an approach.

For these reasons, NFPA requests a 45-day extension of the comment period for the March 1, 2004 notice. An extension until June 1, 2004, will permit careful consideration of the issues presented in the ANPR in the light of the relevant topics to be discussed during the upcoming meeting of the FDA FAC Nutrition Subcommittee.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Cady", written in a cursive style.

John R. Cady
President and CEO